

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An impact-absorbing level comprising:
  - a body including a level face for measuring a surface, the body extending from a first end to a second end;
  - at least one vial mounted in the body at a predetermined angular relationship to the level face; and
  - a first end cap fixed with respect to the first end, the first end cap comprising an impact-resisting outer layer and an impact-compressing intermediate layer, the intermediate layer fixed to the outer layer and having lower density than the outer layer, the intermediate layer positioned between the outer layer and the body;whereby the first end cap absorbs impacts to the outer layer to prevent damage to the body.
2. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 1 further comprising a second end cap fixed with respect to the second end, the second end cap comprising an impact-resisting second outer layer and an impact-compressing second intermediate layer, the second intermediate layer fixed to the second outer layer and having lower density than the second outer layer, the second intermediate layer positioned between the second outer layer and the body.
3. (Original) The level of claim 1 wherein the outer layer is acrylonitrile butadiene styrene and the intermediate layer is thermoplastic rubber.
4. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 1 wherein the first end cap further comprises an impact-resisting inner layer having a higher density than the intermediate layer, the inner layer connecting the intermediate layer to the body.

5. (Original) The level of claim 4 wherein the outer layer is acrylonitrile butadiene styrene, the intermediate layer is thermoplastic rubber, and the inner layer is acrylonitrile butadiene styrene.

6. Cancelled

7. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 1 wherein the body defines a body profile at the first end, the outer layer defines an outer profile which matches the body profile, and the intermediate layer defines ~~includes~~ a rippled baffled profile, the intermediate layer including portions matching the body profile spaced apart by ~~and~~ portions smaller than the body profile.

8. (Original) The level of claim 1 wherein the first end cap is adhered to the body.

9. (Currently Amended) In a level of the type having including (a) a body extending from a first end to a second end, (b) a level face connected with respect to the body, the level face for measuring a surface, and © a vial mounted with respect to the body at a predetermined angular relationship to the level face, the improvement comprising wherein a first dual-density end cap is mounted to the first end and a second dual-density end cap is mounted to the second end~~[[,]]~~ wherein the end caps each have having an outer layer and an intermediate layer contiguous thereto, the outer layer being positioned most distal from the respective end and the intermediate layer having lower density than the outer layer, whereby impact~~[[s]]~~ to the outer layer ~~an end cap~~ results in compression of the intermediate layer ~~end cap~~ and dissipation of the impact to prevent damage to the level.

10. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 9 wherein the intermediate layers ~~have lower densities than the outer layers and are compress~~~~[[ed]]~~ more easily than the outer layers.

11. Cancelled

12. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 9 wherein each the end cap[[s]] further comprises an inner layer[[s]] connecting the intermediate layer[[s]] to the body and non-contiguous with the outer layer.

13. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 12 wherein the intermediate layers have lower densities than the inner and outer layers and ~~are~~ compress[[ed]] more easily than the inner and outer layers.

14. Cancelled

15. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 13 wherein the body defines a body profile at the ends, the outer layers define outer profiles which match the body profile, and the intermediate layers define rippled ~~include baffled~~ profiles, the intermediate layers including portions matching the body profile spaced apart by ~~and~~ portions smaller than the body profile.

16. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 13 wherein the outer layers ~~are~~ is bonded to the intermediate layer[[s]], the intermediate layers ~~are~~ is bonded to the inner layer[[s]], and the inner layers ~~are~~ is bonded to the respective end[[s]] for each end cap.

17. (Currently Amended) A method of providing impact-absorption to a level, the method comprising:

- providing a level having a body defined by first and second ends;
- adhering a dual-density end cap to each end, each end cap having an intermediate layer for connection with respect to the ~~[[a]]~~ respective end and an outer layer secured to the ~~for connection to a respective~~ intermediate layer opposite from the end, the outer layer having an outer surface and greater density than the intermediate layer,

whereby each end cap absorbs impacts to the respective outer surface by allowing the respective outer layer surface to resist the impact by moving ~~be moved~~ toward the respective end during the respective impact through compression of the respective intermediate layer.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein each end cap further includes an inner layer abutting the ~~for connection to a respective end, the~~ and to a respective intermediate layer being spaced apart from the body by the inner layer and the outer layer being spaced apart from the inner layer by the intermediate layer.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18 ~~17~~ wherein the intermediate layers have lower densities than the inner ~~outer~~ layers and the intermediate layers ~~are compress~~~~[[ed]]~~ more than the inner ~~outer~~ layers during an impact.

20. (New) An impact-absorbing level comprising:

- a body including a level face for measuring a surface, the body extending from a first end to a second end;
- at least one vial mounted in the body at a predetermined angular relationship to the level face; and
- a first end cap fixed with respect to the first end, the first end cap comprising an outer layer, an intermediate layer, a web layer and an inner layer, the outer, web and inner layers being comprised of a first material and the intermediate layer being comprised of a second material having lower density than the first material, the intermediate and web layers being positioned between the outer and inner layers and connecting the outer layer to the inner layer, and the inner layer connecting the intermediate and web layers to the body;

whereby the first end cap absorbs impacts to the outer layer to prevent damage to the body.

21. (New) The level of claim 1 wherein each layer has at least one surface coplanar with the level face.

22. (New) The level of claim 4 wherein the first end cap extends outward from the first end to the outer layer and the layers are in longitudinal alignment, the outer layer being spaced apart from and non-contiguous with the inner layer.

23. (New) The level of claim 4 wherein each layer is monolithic.